

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

West Coast Rubber

Corporation for Manufacturing Excellence (Manex)

West Coast Rubber Recycling Improves Competitiveness with Strategic Planning

Client Profile:

West Coast Rubber Recycling (WCRR) handles the scrap tire needs for companies across Northern California. WCRR's recycling center is located in Hollister, California where all tires that are able to be recycled are shredded or buffed into useable products. WCRR manufactures scrap tires into crumb rubber, tire buffings and civil engineering applications, including playground covering, horse arena footing, golf courses, injection, pressure and press molding rubber products. The company employs 65 people.

Situation:

With the accelerating growth of the scrap tire market, WCRR was looking for ways to improve their competitiveness using creative approaches to make high quality renewable products. As a recycler of scrap tires, WCRR gained assistance to achieve these objectives through the Tire-Derived Product Business Assistance Program (TBAP) offered by the California Integrated Waste Management Board. TBAP, managed by Corporation for Manufacturing Excellence (Manex), a NIST MEP network affiliate, provides targeted assistance to scrap tire processors and tire-derived product (TDP) businesses tailored to their unique needs.

Solution:

Manex assessed, analyzed and developed recommendations on a four-component activity plan for WCRR which included facilities layout and flow processes, strategic visioning, a business case template, and Lean manufacturing. Manex reviewed and assessed WCRR's Gilroy's facility to develop a more beneficial layout, supportive of product flow. The analysis included an in-depth Value Stream Map (VSM) which captured a more comprehensive view of the series of processes and cycle times in the facilities. Resulting recommendations consisted of a detailed project plan with sequenced steps and associated timeframes. Manex conducted a strategic planning session to determine WCRR's vision. In addition, the team developed targeted metrics based on the company's goals and objectives with a supporting tire pick up schedule, marketing plan, and recommendations for incentives and supporting plan to further motivate staff. Manex developed a business case template for the customer order process to enable WCRR to select the best order for production based on constraints (e.g. machine capacity, number of people, strategic importance, profitability and feasibility). The business case template also assesses the feasibility of production of two customer orders simultaneously and enables the selection of people with appropriate skill sets for strategically important orders or orders with high production volume and profitability. Lastly, the business case enables WCRR to plan future productions based on business requirements such as revenue or business strategy. Manex provided Lean training to owners within the manufacturing process, 5S (Sort, Set in Order, Shine, Standardize, Sustain) training to organize the parts storage area, facilitated a 5S event before the open house and conducted two 5S kaizen events. The insight, analysis and recommendations provided by Manex led to significant gains in the productivity, profitability and consumption of recyclable rubber.

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Results:

- * Improved utilization by 80 percent.
- * Improved equipment and labor efficiency by 80 percent.
- * Reduced transportation cost per tire.
- * Identified new uses and markets for recycled rubber.
- * Provided comprehensive workforce development.

Testimonial:

"With Manex's expertise, we have been able to increase our productivity through improved utilization and labor efficiency, and more importantly identify new clients in our region to dramatically grow our business."

Cameron Wright, President